

CONFIDENTIAL

28 January 1954

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Amory

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1. I have checked on the accuracy of the section on survivor benefits, included in [REDACTED] "Civil Service Retirement." The circumstances under which annuities are paid to the widows of former Government employees who were in retirement status at the time of their death are correctly outlined in this section. The reasoning behind the provision that widows are disqualified, once they have reached age fifty, seems to be that their husbands had the option to decide at the time of their retirement whether or not they wished to make provision for widow benefits (by voluntarily electing to take reduced annuities against the contingency of their death). It is argued that if such widows were eligible for annuities after age fifty the Retirement Fund would be inordinately taxed, and there would be no motivation for retiring employees to select the option which provides for reduced annuities as the price for widow benefits in the event of death. This arrangement is written into the Civil Service Retirement Act.

2. The system operates differently for widows of employees who die while they are still in employment status. In these cases, if there are no surviving children, the widow becomes eligible for annuities at age fifty. If there are dependent children, the widow is eligible for benefits regardless of age. Thus, the benefits available to widows are somewhat similar in the case of personnel (1) who die while in employment status and (2) who die after retirement has already started (provided they have exercised their option in behalf of lower annuities in exchange for widow benefits).

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L. K. WHITE

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